

STAT

Page Denied

STAT

ARTICLES IN USSR PRESS DERIDE MOSLEM RELIGION

[Comment: This report presents condensations and extracts from anti-Islamic articles published in the Central Asiatic vernacular and Russian-language press of the USSR from 4 August to 28 September 1954. It should be noted that a great part of these articles appeared on dates which were close to the Kurban Bayram (Festival of Sacrifice)--one of the two great Moslem festivals, the other being the festival following the Ramadan about 70 days before the Kurban Bayram. The Kurban Bayram occurred on 10 August 1954. In this connection a Moscow, TASS, Hellschreiber message in English, was beamed to Europe on 10 August 1954 in report No 155. In that message, Moscow, reported that Kurban Bayram celebrations were held in Moscow and in various Moslem communities of the USSR.]

DECADENT IDEAS OF THE PAST MUST BE FOUGHT -- Tashkent, Uzbekistoni Surkh, 4 Aug 54

[Condensation of an article from the Tadzhik-language newspaper published under the above title.]

The Moslem religion, like other religions, is serving the interests of the bourgeois capitalists in their fight against the forces of peace, democracy, and socialism. The Anglo-American imperialists, with the assistance of the Vatican and the Moslem reactionaries, have been intriguing and creating dissensions in the foreign-ruled countries. They are spending great sums to strengthen the position of the religious organizations and religious schools in those countries.

MOSLEM RELIGION AIMS AT ENSLAVEMENT OF WOMEN -- Tashkent, Kizil Uzbekiston, 5 Aug 54

[Summary of a lecture delivered in the Palace of Culture of Oktyabr'skiy Rayon, Tashkent, and published in an Uzbek-language newspaper under the above title.]

Religion, and especially the Moslem religion, is the most harmful outgrowth of the past. Struggle against the Moslem religion is struggle against the anti-scientific and reactionary ideology, against the ideology which prevents progress. The Moslem religion, which adopted all the previously existing pagan Arab beliefs, was imposed by the Arabs upon the peoples of Central Asia. Like Christianity and Buddhism, the Moslem religion engenders the moral enslavement of its followers who, while working for the benefit of others, remain in constant poverty.

For several centuries, the Moslem clergy had been poisoning the minds of their followers in Central Asia with the teachings of Moslem scholasticism. Religion, which is the support of the feudal reactionaries, demanded obedience on the part of the workers. The reactionary Moslem ideology aimed at depriving women completely of their rights both in the family and in society. The Moslem religion and the Koran say that women are under the absolute authority of their husbands. The Moslem religion has never tried to limit this authority. According to the Koran, woman was created for man's needs. The Koran legalized the inequality between men and women with respect to ownership and legal rights. The Moslem religion permits men to marry several women at the same time, forces women to wear the veil, sanctions the marriage of underage girls and, worst of all, consents to their prostitution. In the question of marriage, the Moslem religion gives the right to the men to divorce their wives without any reason.

STAT

According to the Moslem religion, marriage is a business transaction. Men bought their wives and considered them as personal property. That is why marriage and divorce had very harmful effects on family life in the Moslem world of Asia. In Moslem families, men and women and their children never lived together. There were constant quarrels. The birth of a girl in a Moslem family was considered a bad omen. Moslem women who gave birth to girls were looked upon with contempt. In countries where the Moslem religion prevailed, girls were brought up in seclusion.

The Koran stipulates that the girls must be brought up in the home without having any contact with the outside world. The Sheriyat permitted married Moslem women to see their parents once a week, and their other relatives once a year. The Sheriyat forbids women to appear in places where there are men. Before the October revolution, women were not even permitted to earn a living by working with men. Women who violated the precepts of the Moslem religion were considered outcasts. In Central Asia, women were bought and sold by their husbands like any other chattels. The Moslem religion and its Sheriyat oppressed the women for centuries.

All Moslem women were completely illiterate. Most of them could not even count up to 100. The treatment of the people had been entrusted to completely ignorant doctors. Before the October Revolution, any woman who violated the custom of veil-wearing was threatened with death. With the propagation of Moslem teachings, with the application of the Moslem traditions, and with the expansion of the influence of the Moslem clergy on the private and social life of the Moslems, the status of the Moslem women deteriorated. In the course of several centuries, the Moslem clergy prepared and issued extensive laws and regulations for the purpose of forcing women to live without any individual rights.

The capitalists are taking advantage of laws and traditions established by the Sheriyat to strengthen their position in their colonies and possessions. Through their lackeys among the governing circles of Turkey, the Arab countries, Iran, and Pakistan, the Anglo-American imperialists take advantage of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Iranism, to further their own interests and to perpetuate capitalist oppression. The reactionary Moslem jurisconsults and the Moslem clergy in the Near and Middle East want to see to it that all the precepts of the Moslem religion, including those relative to the wearing of the veil, are faithfully observed.

The reactionaries in Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, prodded by the Anglo-American imperialists, want to force the women of their countries to live secluded from the outside world.

Following the October Revolution, the Moslem women in the USSR were freed from political, economic, and spiritual oppression.

MOSLEM TRADITIONS, MOST OBNOXIOUS HERITAGE OF THE PAST -- Tashkent, Kizil Uzbekiston, 7 Aug. 54

Until 705 A.D., when the Arabs invaded Central Asia and forced the Moslem religion on the Tadzhiks, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Kirghizes, these peoples had worshipped the sun, the moon, and other natural phenomena. However, their acceptance of the Moslem faith did not stop their idolatrous practices. For example, even now in Uzbekistan many trees, large rocks, water fountains and similar objects are worshipped or regarded as sacred.

In accordance with the old pre-Islamic customs and traditions, animal sacrifices are still being offered to these objects. The present sacrifice of lambs at the feast of Kurban Bayram, although purporting to be related to the

STAT

Biblical story of Abraham's getting ready to sacrifice his son Isaac, is in reality connected with the old pre-Islamic customs. In fact, there existed the custom among the Scythians to sacrifice in the spring of every year one out of every 100 of their slaves and let his blood run over their sword. On the other hand, the Evenks used to sacrifice large animals in the fall of every year and let their blood flow into the rivers or lakes. believing that such sacrifices would result in a plentiful catch of fish.

The Moslem clergy is using all these customs to its own advantage, and forcing the Moslem population to sacrifice animals. It tells them that if they give the fleece of the sacrificed animal to the Moslem priest they will go to the paradise and, if not, to hell. The feast of the Kurban Bayram takes place only to make the Moslem clergy richer and to perpetuate their existence at the expense of the workers.

THE PIOUS ARAB AND HIS COCK -- Moscow, Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 8 Aug 54

A certain dervish was going to Mecca. As becomes a holy man, he did not have a single piaster with him and lived off those he met along the way.

It was still a very long way to Mecca. The sun was beating down unmercifully and an empty stomach reminded the dervish of food. Fortunately, along the way he came upon a small oasis, surrounded with slender palms from under which rippled clean, clear water. The holy man looked at the trees, then at the road, raised his eyes to the sun, remembered that he had eaten nothing since morning, and turning off the road, began to walk toward a house. A poor Arab who lived there, came out to meet him.

The Arab invited the dervish in, fed him, gave him a drink, and put him to sleep in his bed.

Three days passed. The poor man strained himself to the utmost to treat the holy man, who had not thought of leaving, as well as possible.

A week passed. The dervish faithfully, four times a day, sat at the table and even more faithfully slept on his host's bed.

"My Lord," the frightened wife said to the Arab. "Is it not time for our guest to resume his journey to the holy places? He is eating us out of house and home and we are poor people, and our children are howling from hunger."

"It is a great sin to turn a pious pilgrim out of one's house."

Another week passed. Once again, but even more persistently, the wife said to the Arab, "My Lord, your will be done, but we must get rid of our holy guest. We will soon have nothing to eat, and his appetite is growing each day."

"There is nothing else to do," agreed the husband, and left his work and approached the dervish.

The dervish sat under the palms with his feet immersed in the brook and having finished eating a leg of lamb, was pondering the position of the stars. The host submissively approached him and shyly said:

"Respected father, bless you a thousand times and thank you for honoring my poor home with your presence. But, to my shame (Allah knows I am telling the truth), today we finished the last sheep and ate the last stores of dates."

"So be it. Wake me as soon as it is light tomorrow, that I may perform my morning prayers and continue my pilgrimage."

STAT

In the morning when the stars were just barely shining and the east was beginning to get red the host touched the shoulder of his guest.

"Wake up, holy man. It is time to go. The cock has already crowed."

"What? You still have a cock?" wondered the dervish, and turning over went back to sleep.

SAYINGS AND PROVERBS -- Moscow, Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 8 Aug 54

[Of the 18 sayings published in this issue of the source, only one is specifically anti-Islamic, as follows:]

Mohammed would have a difficult time of it here; we are building paradise on earth ourselves.

THE FIGHT AGAINST BLIND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS MUST CONTINUE -- Alma-Ata, Sotsialistik Kazakstan, 10 Aug 54

[From an article by G. Abishev published in the Kazakh-language daily.]

The Vatican and Pope Pius XII are serving the interests of the capitalists, and the official organ of the Vatican has approved the use of the A-bomb and the H-bomb. The ruling circles in the US abet racial antagonisms and the negroes and Indians are being deprived of their civil rights. Like the other religions, the Moslem religion also brings its followers into a state of torpor. The fast of Ramadan is harmful, especially to the workers.

During Ramadan, a Moslem is not supposed to eat, drink, or smoke during the day. In spite of this, he is compelled to work. If he suffers a bodily injury, he cannot have a doctor attend to it during the Ramadan. The Moslem religion prevents the training of the workers in accordance with Communist ideology. It is the duty of Party and Komsomol leaders to enlighten the Moslems about the harmful effects of the Ramadan fast. In addition, the sacrificing of sheep and cattle on the occasion of the Kurban Bayram is the cause of unnecessary waste, not only of the animals but also of manpower. No work is supposed to be performed during the Kurban Bayram holidays, which last 3 days.

Like the other religions, the Moslem religion fosters hatred among the nations. The Koran divides the people into Moslems and infidels. During the Tsarist regime, the Moslem religion was used as a tool to oppress other peoples. The Moslem religion does not consider women as human beings. Previously, they were sold and bought as chattels. A woman, according to the Moslem religion, is the property of her husband. If he dies, then his older or younger brother or a relative becomes her owner. Thanks to Communist efforts, all these customs will be uprooted.

RELIGION IS THE TOOL OF THE CAPITALISTS -- Stalinabad, Tojikistoni Surkh, 10 Aug 54

[With reference to the Soviet government's program to propagate scientific atheism in the USSR, this Tadzhik-language newspaper writes:]

In the capitalist countries, religion serves for the political, economic, and even moral enslavement of the peoples. In the US alone, there are close to 100,000 fortune tellers and witchmongers, who exploit the workers with their tricks. It must be noted also that in 20 states of the US the teaching of Darwin's theories is forbidden. In the other capitalist countries, religion serves the interests of capital.

STAT

The Kurban Bayram is a remnant of decadent customs and traditions. The religious parasites poison the minds of the simple-minded and short-witted persons, and, by threatening them with "paradise" and "hell," induce them to sacrifice animals.

ISLAM IN THE SERVICE OF THE IMPERIALISTS -- Tashkent, Uzbekistani Surkh, 27 Aug 54
[Under the above caption, this Tadzhik-language newspaper published the following article by M. Aliyev.]

Until the October Revolution, the Moslem religion, together with its customs and traditions, was used as a tool by the local potentates, the bourgeois nationalists, and the autocratic governments for the merciless exploitation of the peoples of Central Asia. It is now serving the British and American imperialists in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey by assisting them to subjugate the workers of those countries to their will.

When Mussolini visited Lebanon [probably should be Libya] in 1937, the reactionary Moslems in that country acclaimed him as the "protector" and the "champion" of Islam. At the same time, the Moslem clergy supported his aggression against Ethiopia by declaring it "a holy war for the preservation of the Moslem faith." During World War II, the Nazis built a mosque in Berlin and issued several publications of the Koran. In these new publications, they inserted special passages, giving the reasons why the world should be ruled by Hitler, and had them distributed through Moslem spies among the peoples of the Middle and Near East. While the Nazis were broadcasting daily talks over the Berlin radio in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian for the purpose of furthering their plans, the Anglo-American imperialists assumed the role of protectors of Islam and carried on their own aggressive propaganda.

Following the instructions of the Anglo-American capitalists, the Vatican attempts to enhance its influence in the Near and Middle East by supporting the Moslem religious organizations against the "Communist threat." Under the guise of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism, these organizations are working for the suppression of the popular liberation movements in India, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Burma, Vietnam, Malaya, and Indonesia.

There are now several religious Islamic organizations in the Far East. One of these is the "Jammiyat ul Ulama-i Islam," which is headed by Mawlana Zafar Akhmadi Usmani, a Pakistani leader and spy in the service of the British-Indian Political Department. There is also the progovernment Universal Moslem Union of Pakistan (Ittifaqi Ruyjahanii Musulmanani Pakistan), which was re-organized with the financial assistance of the US. Before World War II, this organization served the German and Italian fascists, and now it is in the service of the instigators of World War III.

These organizations are working for the furtherance of the colonial policies of the Anglo-Americans, for the establishment by them of military bases in the Middle and the Near East, and for poisoning the feelings of the peoples of these areas with their ultra nationalist and religious fanaticism. To attain this objective they make full use of the press, the religious literature, radio, motion pictures, and mosques. The Moslem clergy, whose main objective is to mislead and to hold enslaved the peoples of the eastern countries, use all means to prove that class struggle among the Moslems is contrary to the tenets of the Koran. Moslem leaders compel the Moslem peoples to follow blindly the Koran and the Sacred Law. By all the means possible they stir up conflicts among the nations. The bloody clashes between the Moslems of Pakistan and the Hindus, between the Jews and the Arabs, are striking examples.

STAT

The Anglo-Americans take advantage of the religious differences of the Hindus and the Moslems in Pakistan to further their own interests. They cause the shedding of blood on the day of Kurban Bayram. The colonial powers are trying to thwart the liberation movement in Indonesia. In this they are supported by the reactionary bourgeois organizations "Tentara-Islam-Indonesia" and "Darul Islam." These two organizations persecute and exterminate any one who is in favor of peace, democracy. Islam and its ideology obstruct social progress.

NOT BY GOD'S GRACE, BUT BY PERSISTENT LABOR WE FORGE OUR HAPPINESS -- Stalinabad, Communist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[The above headline appeared across the top of a full page of anti-religious material in the 28 September issue of this daily.]

Communist education includes the overcoming of reactionary remnants in the minds of the people. These include harmful religious prejudices and superstitions. The social roots of religion have been liquidated in our country. The overwhelming mass of the Soviet people has broken with religion forever. Our workers, kolkhoz peasants, and intellectuals--the builders of Communism--are the masters of their land and all its tremendous riches. They are the creators of their own happiness.

However, remnants of the past, including religious superstitions, are still present in the consciousness of some individuals. These remnants possess great vitality; they do not die out of their own accord. We must carry on a determined struggle against them. We must, first of all, strengthen scientific-atheistic propaganda.

The writers, poets, and artists of the past and the present expose, in their writings, the reactionary essence and harmfulness of religious prejudices.

On this page we publish selections from the works of writers, proverbs, and sayings from Tadzhik folklore, all of which are of an antireligious nature.

OUR HAPPINESS IS TO LABOR FOR THE WELFARE OF OUR MOTHERLAND -- Stalinabad, Communist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[This item consists of a short article by a foreman in the Cotton Ginning Plant imeni Kuybyshev. Only selections of a clearly anti-Islamic nature are translated.]

...My parents prayed much, observed fasts, and asked God for happiness. But Allah must not have heard their prayers. They passed all their life in need, in cold, and in hunger. Two of my brothers, Akhmed and Khamro, who never had enough bread, to say nothing of milk, died when they were still babies.

...All these examples [of successful Soviet workmen] testify to the fact that the material well-being of every citizen in our country is a result of selfless labor. And without labor, even if you break your head with praying you will not gain happiness.

MUSHFIKI AND THE AILING IMAM -- Stalinabad, Communist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[The following is a complete translation of a story from Tadzhikskiy Narodnyy Yumor (Tadzhik National Humor) which was republished in this source.]

STAT

During one of the nights of Ramadan--the month of fasting during which one can eat only at night--an imam came to Mushfiki and said,

"I am suffocating, I am bursting, Mushfiki! Cure me, save my soul!"

Mushfiki asked him what he had eaten that day.

The Imam replied: "What could I have eaten out of the ordinary on a fast day? Three cookies of some kind or another, when my neighbor was beginning his fast. Oh, and then I guess a glass of nishallo (whipped egg-white with sugar and sweet juice added). Then they cooked up some soup but I drank only one and a half glasses of that all told. Then, it is true, I had to try some pies that another neighbor had baked... I could not insult him, could I? However, I ate no more than 30 or 40 pieces!"

"Did you eat any fruit?" asked Mushfiki.

"Yes, a little... How many melons does one tray hold? And then a tray of grapes, and five or six pears..."

"Well, I can advise only one means for the salvation of your soul. You must climb up on a hill. Dig a hole in the ground, about 3 or 4 arshins in depth. Lie down in this hole with your face up and try to scatter dirt on yourself... Then if 30 or 40 bricks are placed on top of the dirt, and five or six marble slabs are laid on top of these, and all this is covered over with plaster, you can rest assured that your soul will be liberated from your illness and the soul of the people will be liberated from you!"

KHODZHA BORON -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadjhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[The following is a complete translation of Khodzha Boron by Rakhim Dzhalil. It was translated into Russian by Il. Rutenshteyn in 1941.]

On the hill behind the village, under the rotten trunk of a dried up plane tree, towered the tomb of Khodzha Boron. (Khodzha -- a descendant of one of the first caliphs who were the successors of the prophet Mohammed.) [Boron is the Tadjhik work for rain.] Its cupola was visible from afar. Travelers, catching sight of it when still half a farsang ("farsakh" is the distance which a horse travels in one hour.) distant, would stop, lift their eyes, and whisper prayers.

Under the vault of the tomb, on the long marble epitaph stone, it was written in pompous, spacious Arabic that Khodzha Boron belonged to the house of Ali (cousin and son-in-law of the prophet. The epitaph stone was decorated with a number of twisted goat's horns and other testimonies of the veneration of the pilgrims. And here was a candlestick in which the pilgrims, in accordance with their vows, placed candles and an iron kettle into which they poured their offerings of cottonseed oil.

To the left of the entrance to the tomb was the cell of a sheikh (a religious teacher; in Central Asia usually a leader of a group of dervishes). On the right water ran into a swampy pool from a crack in a tremendous rock. No one knows when or by whom this splendid tomb was built. From the sheiks it was learned only that the holy Khodzha Boron, great-grandson of the great-grandsons of Ali, rests here. The last sheikh of the tomb--the ancient, bent, and wrinkled domullo, (an honorific title of a religious teacher) Mirkhalim, who looked more like an ape than a man--willingly told of the miracles of Khodzha Boron in confirmation of the holiness of the latter:

STAT

"Once, on a hot summer day, the Khodzha was passing through our country. At that time there was not a single kishlak in this neighborhood. There was burnt wasteland all around. There were no mosquitoes flying about; their wings had all been burnt off. No man could pass; his feet would have burned. And the Khodzha saw a caravan which was perishing from thirst. Raising his hands to the heavens, the Khodzha said a prayer and struck his rock with the end of his staff. The rock cracked and water proceeded from it.

"The people of the caravan who had been saved fell at the feet of the Khodzha and begged that he, by his prayers which were pleasing to God, bring water to this entire area so that people might live here. Khodzha heeded their requests and the rains poured down and streams of water flowed down from the mountains. This waste, where formerly there grew only camel's grass, was transformed into a blooming oasis.

"And so, by the will of the wonder-worker Khodzha Boron, kishlaks sprang up in this neighborhood. The transformed climate was pleasing to the soul of the Khodzha and he stayed to live here and he died here. In accordance with his will, our forefathers buried him here and erected this tomb. This was 599 years ago, according to my late father," said Domullo Mirkhalim, finishing his story with a pious sigh.

Here the domullo would invariably begin to complain long and bitterly to his listeners that in our days, on the eve of doomsday and the judgement, the Bolsheviks and those with them have no pious sentiments towards the holy ascetics and wonder-workers or toward the places of their eternal rest, and that they cast pernicious doubt on the wonders of those who were pleasing to God...

The sheikh did have good grounds for such complaints and lamentations. Very, very few pilgrims were coming to the tomb. These were primarily old men who, from time to time, would bring a hen or a rooster in place of the sheep and goats that the pilgrims use to drive in as valuable gifts. And the offering of an ox or a camel--which groups of pilgrims used to make frequently when praying to Khodzha Boron for rain for the dried-up soil--had not been made for 7 or 8 years!...

Because of all this lengthy and fruitless grief and misfortune, the last sheikh of the tomb of Khodzha Boron, Domullo Mirkhalim, became ill and one fine day last year passed away. The tomb was left without a sheikh.

* * *

A stately young curly haired man in traveling clothes and with a suitcase in his hand entered the building of the kishlak soviet. The chairman of the soviet--a stout man with a ruddy complexion who was leafing through a notebook--stood up to greet the new arrival and smiled broadly and happily:

"Salaam aleikum, Zarif-zade! And you're alive and well. So you've arrived. Well, well, let me look at you."

"Hello, Sharif-aka! I just got here. And I came directly to you."

"Welcome, son. Now tell me, did you finish your studies?"

"Yes."

"You're a hydraulic engineer?"

"Yes."

STAT

"Well, I suppose you have dreams of improving the water supply of your home kishlak?"

"Exactly. And it's for this reason that I came directly to you. Sharif-aka, I stopped by the tomb of Khodzha Boron on my way..."

"To worship?" asked the chairman as he burst out laughing. "Who did you give your offering to? Dumullo Mirkhalim, of ill memory, died..."

"You're his successor," laughed Zarif-zade, in turn. "I've brought a gift for you...But joking aside, you know that water trickles out of that rock by the tomb. I looked over the place for half an hour and came to the conclusion that there must be large underground springs beneath the rock. If..."

"What, have you taken up opium smoking? If this were so, then the underground stream could be heard through the rock and it would have been uncovered long before our time..."

"Be patient and listen to me," said the young man, with a touch of impatience in his voice. "The hill under the tomb is all of the same type of rock. The ground water flows at a great depth without any breaks, therefore you can't hear it. If you will help me and get the people behind us I'll blast the rock and the kishlak will have water."

"You're certain that water is there?"

"I'll pay for the whole thing if there is no water there. But all signs indicate that there is a lot of water."

"Well, if that's so..." began the chairman, but became pensive and asked, "And what will happen to the tomb?"

"The tomb will be blown to pieces."

"The explosion will destroy it?"

"You aren't planning to become a sheikh and take the place of Dumullo Mirkhalim, are you?"

"In order to destroy the tomb we need the permission of the people of the Kishlak, son. And that won't be easy... But you go home and get some rest. I'll talk it over with the secretary of the party organization and the chairmen of the kolkhozes. I'll bring up the question at a general meeting of the kolkhoz-
n'as. We'll get permission from rayon headquarters..."

"Invite me to the meeting, I'll speak myself..."

"Of course. You've undertaken a big job, a responsible one..."

* * *

The tomb of Khodzha Boron was surrounded by a large number of people. Not only the people of the kishlak were there, but people from nearby settlements as well. Everyone wanted to see for himself how they drilled the bore-holes and set the charges. Only the old men refused to come near, but were walking back and forth at some distance, muttering among themselves.

STAT

Toward noon all the preliminary work for the blasting was completed. All that remained to be done was to remove the spectators to a safe distance and set off the explosion. Sharif-aka was on horseback, shouting in stentorian tones to the lingerers. But now the crows had scattered and the drivers had driven the trucks off. The eyes of all were glued to the place where the explosion was to occur. One of the old men began to mutter in a loud whisper "loknavi" -- the beginning of a special prayer used in moments of danger, bewilderment, or fright. A terrifying explosion shook the countryside. Clouds of dust and broken rock were hurled into the air. The tomb was blown to dust.

"Water, water!..."

The crowd streamed towards the fountain of water which was pouring up with great force from under the ground. The kolkhozniks, the chairman of the kishlak soviet, and the people from the rayon center, all surrounded the young engineer and vied with each other to congratulate him. Behind the backs of the people who were crowded around the fountain, several old men began to dig in the dirt with hoes.

"If it is permissible," said one of them, "we would like to collect the bones of the Khodzha and bury them at another spot."

"And are you going to put up a new tomb. If you do, you won't get any pilgrims, grandfather!"

"Go ahead," said Zarif-zade. "But the bones of the Khodzha must have been tremendous, grandfather. The sheikh used to say that Khodzha Boron was built like a giant."

"Any bones that were there must have turned to dust long ago," said Sharif-aka.

"Anyway, let them search. Maybe for some reason or other the bones didn't decay."

"Several boys were now digging with the hoes which they had taken from the hands of the old men. After considerable unsuccessful effort, one of the hoes struck the skull of a donkey. With it there were the remaining bones of the skeleton of the donkey. No matter where they dug now with the hoes they were unable to uncover anything else.

"But where are the imperishable bones of the Khodzha? Why are donkey's bones here?" asked one of the old men, bewildered.

"Once I read in an old book about a man from Samarkand who buried his dead donkey, built a tomb over the spot, became a sheikh, and, having taken in many offerings, disappeared. Perhaps "Kodzha Boron" is the donkey of one of the ancestors of Domullo Mirkhalim and made a living for these parasites," said Sharif-aka, laughing. Brothers, let's leave the bones of the Donkey-Khodzha and finish digging an irrigation ditch. We have to save this water..."

Laughing, the people set about to work. The ground water, breaking through to the surface, was still pouring out like a fountain. Triumphant in his first victory, Zarif-zade was enjoying the coolness of the spray of the water that was striking his face.

SAYINGS OF OMAR KHAYYAM (1040-1123) -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

The spirit of a slave lies in the idol and the Kaaba.
The peal of bells is the slavish tongue of submissiveness.

STAT

And the black mark of slavery lies alike
On the rosary, the cross, the church and on the pulpit.

O Heaven, to the rogue thy hand is generous:
His are the baths, the mills, and the coolness of the springs;
But he who is his soul is pure, has only a crust of bread.
Such is Heaven--bah! It does not rate my spittle.

To fill the ocean with pebbles
Is the wish of the hypocrites: stupidity or deception?
They frighten you with hell and they tempt you with paradise,
But show me a traveler who has been to these distant lands.

I enter the mosque. It is late and quiet.
I search not for miracles nor do I pray...
Once I stole a rug from this place.
It wore out and I need another.

A SELECTION FROM MIRZO BEDIL' -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

The Koran is the Koran. But you see the Koran is rubbish,
If accursed Sufism gave over the temple to religion.
Indolence, gluttony, shamelessness, stinginess, and lust,
Hypocrisy and ambition--such now is Islam!

GEMS OF WISDOM FROM THE PEOPLE -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

God has a granary--the landlord's (bey's) belly.
Faith is for the full stomach, they say.
When you fall, don't put your hope in god, better grab hold of a bush.
For a good deed you don't have to tell your fortune by the Koran.
A mullah is like a broom which sweeps clean the dostarkhon (table-cloth
with refreshments).
No one ever heard of a snake with feet, milk from a chicken, or bread from
a mullah.
It's easy to become a mullah; it's difficult to become a man..
You will get nothing from omens but evil.
What with funeral feasts and requiems the priest has a satisfied look.
Not the sorcerer, nor god, nor the servants of god, are of any help to us.

A QUARREL WITH GOD -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[The following is the complete translation of a poem by Nosir Khisrou,
1003-1088.]

If we were created only for prayers --
Then why did you create the devil, lord?
Many words have I stored away for the talk --
And still I cannot overcome my terror.
But just what will happen at the Last Judgement?
How will we reckon up our old accounts?
And if you do not tear out my sinful tongue,
Still can I not keep silent before the judgement?
And deprive me creator, of my tongue,
Would this be just? -- No, no!
Why did you promise to your creatures
To observe the laws of justice?
If you deign to be present at the Judgement,

STAT

I will not be able to think at all.
 If another is entrusted with my trial
 Why should I run to him like a fool?
 All-holy and all-wise, oh why
 Substitute another for thyself in revenge on me?
 Order me straight to hell --
 There is no need for empty chatter.
 The world beyond the grave is not like that on earth:
 There force and bribes are of no avail.
 On thee all tasks are laid --
 Then carry them out! Why wait-- I do not understand.
 To pray, just god, thou hast ordered us,
 And to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca:
 Are you not like the hunter of a chamois?
 You catch the animal when it is dreaming happily,
 And you shout: "Run, run!"
 And then you set your fast dogs on it.
 You order us to pray
 And then you set the devil on us.
 If you are so far above reproach
 Then, I repeat, why did you create satan?
 Briefly, there is so much darkness in this business
 That I have given up theology as a bad thing.
 If you created the good and the bad
 Then there is no sense in rewards and punishments.
 Do you wish to have irreproachable servants?
 Then why did you place us, the evil ones, on earth?
 You give evil and you get evil in return --
 In this respect how are you better than I?
 I may be bad, but I was created by you
 And you don't like me? Then you shouldn't have created me.

"GIFTS" OF THE PADISHAH AND OF GOD -- Stalinabad, Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 28 Sep 54

[The following is a complete translation of a story from Tadzhikskiy Narodnyy Yumor (Tadzhik National Humor) republished in this source.]

Once upon a time Afandi did something that pleased the padishah.

"Ask of me anything that you wish," blurted out the padishah.

Thinking over the extraordinary kindness of his ruler, Afandi said:

"If you wish to make me a gift then give me a bag of gold so that I may spend the rest of my life comfortably with my wife and children."

But the padishah had already thought better of it and, ordering his treasurer to give Afandi a sealed bag, he winked in a scarcely noticeable way.

Saying "I obey, Sire," the treasurer took his leave.

Having received the heavy bag, Afandi carried it home happily.

"Rejoice, wife," said he. "We now have a rich kettle and rich spoon. If you wish, you can dress ten times each day in different dresses, buy ten kinds of cosmetics, go to the bath ten times a day. I will give you money for everything. But now come here, and let us count the gold together. I cannot count it alone!"

Afandi cut the seal on the bag with a knife, emptied it, but instead of gold, small pebbles fell out.

STAT

Stunned, Nasreddin Afandi, looking first at the heavens and then at the ground and shaking his head, thought deeply.

"What does all this mean?" asked his anxious wife. "Who gave you these pebbles and why did you bring them home?"

"It means this! the padishah answered my request and gave me a bag of gold. And I brought it here. But I am not such a fool to bring home a bag of pebbles!" answered the indignant Afandi.

"And the padishah is not such a fool to give you a bag of gold," said the wife reproachfully. "Do not ask gold from the padishah, but from God!"

"You speak wisely, wife!"

After the oblation he faced Mecca, kneeled and raised his hands: "O God, O Almighty, send me a bag of gold from your secret treasury!"

Evening fell; the time for the last evening prayers passed; midnight came, and Afandi continued to pray, but no gold appeared from the secret treasury.

"Can it be that I am praying too softly and God has not heard my prayer? Perhaps I must pray louder," thought Nasreddin and began to shout the words of his prayer at the top of his voice.

His sleeping neighbor was awakened by Afandi's wild cry and muttering "What is it?", climbed to the roof of his house. From there he saw Afandi who was loudly pleading with God for gold. The neighbor stood a little while, observing Afandi, but could not endure it, and taking a piece of brick from the wall, threw it at Afandi.

Hearing the sound of something falling not far away, Afandi happily cried: "Wife! Bring a light quickly. God has sent us gold from his secret treasury!"

The wife brought the light. Afandi saw the piece of burnt brick and thought: "It is well that God did not hit me in the head with this brick!" and turning to his wife, said: "It is clear now; God is on the padishah's side!"

- E N D -